



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION IX  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105

June 25, 2012

James E. Williams V-S42214  
Salinas Valley State Prison  
P.O. Box 1050  
Soledad, CA 93960  
A-1-224  
Legal Mail

Dear Mr. Williams,

Thank you for your recent letter to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Region 9 office. You requested information on the quality of the drinking water at Kern Valley State Prison (KVSP).

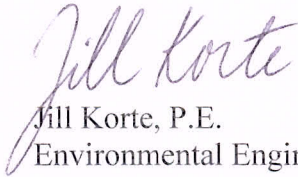
Kern Valley State Prison currently violates the drinking water standard for arsenic. The arsenic in the water at KVSP generally ranges from 0.015 to 0.020 mg/liter, which is above the allowable maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 0.010 mg/liter. The arsenic is naturally occurring in the ground water.

KVSP is under an enforcement order from the California Department of Public Health to resolve the arsenic violation. An arsenic removal treatment system is currently under construction at KVSP and is expected to be completed by December of this year.

The Safe Drinking Water Act requires EPA to set drinking water goals at levels at or below known or anticipated adverse effects on people with an adequate margin of safety. Because of the human variation, EPA sets these levels to protect those that might be most vulnerable to the contaminant. EPA's risk assessments use conservative factors to address these more vulnerable people. EPA sets MCLs for potentially cancer causing contaminants like arsenic at levels as low as can be practically done. Practical means that we can actually measure it and treatment systems can remove it. Generally, the MCLs are many times lower than any level where disease is seen by the medical profession. EPA wants the risk level at the MCL to be so low that even if your water is somewhat above the MCL, you should be safe.

I hope we have answered your questions to your satisfaction. Please contact our office if you have any additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Jill Korte". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jill Korte, P.E.  
Environmental Engineer  
CA PWSS Project Officer  
Drinking Water Office

Cc: John Kemmerer, U.S. EPA Region 9 Los Angeles Office  
District 12 Engineer, California Department of Public Health